

DRAFT: 10-24-08

**TO: YOUTH COUNCIL
STATE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD**

DATE: October 29, 2008

**SUBJECT: Issue Paper – Sixth Youth Barrier
Poor Work History or Lacks Work History Definition**

The Workforce Investment Act law and regulations define the barriers that identify eligible youth for WIA programs. Five of the sixth barriers identified (see background information) in WIA were defined in WIA. The responsibility for creating the definition of the sixth barrier **an individual (including a youth with a disability) who requires additional assistance to complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment** was given to the states.

Background:

In 2000, the State Workforce Investment Board defined the sixth youth eligibility criterion as an individual (including a youth with a disability) who requires additional assistance to complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment as an individual who: has no vocational/employment goal AND has below average grades OR has a poor work history (to include no work history) OR has been fired from a job in the last six calendar months. The State Board recommended that the local boards use this definition with the option of adjusting it to fit local needs.

The Balance of State Local Workforce Investment Board's definition of the additional youth eligibility was an individual (including a youth with a disability) who requires additional assistance to complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment as an individual who: has no vocational/employment goal or is at risk of dropping out of school; OR has a poor work history (to include no work history) OR has been fired from a job in the last six calendar months

The Concentrated Employment Program Workforce Investment definition of the additional youth eligibility was an individual (including a youth with a disability) who requires additional assistance to complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment as an individual who: has no vocational/employment goal; OR has been fired from a job in the last six calendar months.

Montana's move from two planning areas to a single-state planning area eliminated the need for two separate definitions of the 6th youth criterion and in 2006 the Youth Council defined a single definition which follows:

An individual (including a youth with a disability) who has no vocational/employment goal and has below average grades or has a poor work history (to include no work history) or has been fired from a job in the last six calendar months.

USDOL Monitoring Review 2008: As a result of a finding during the Federal Monitoring Review in April 2008 the State is required to clarify the definition of "poor work history or no work history".

RECOMMENDATION:

The Workforce Investment Act Unit in the Montana Department of Labor and Industry recommend that Youth Council consider the definition of "**poor work history**" to include youth who:

- (1) are working less than full-time;
- (2) have been fired from a job;
- (3) have a sporadic work history (history of job hopping);
- (4) are working in jobs that are unskilled or dead-end; or
- (5) no past work history.

BACKGROUND:

The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 defines an eligible youth as an individual who:

- (1) is age 14 through 21;
- (2) is a low income individual;
- (3) is within one or more of the following categories:
 - (a) basic skills deficient (an individual with English reading or computing skills at or below 8th grade level on a generally accepted standardized test or a comparable score on a criterion-referenced test);
 - (b) school dropout (an individual who is no longer attending any school and has not received a secondary school diploma);
 - (c) homeless, runaway, or foster child - (homeless is defined as an individual who lacks fixed, regular, adequate nighttime residence; foster child is an individual on whose behalf state or local government payments are made; runaway is an individual under 18 who absents him/herself from home or place of legal residence without permission of parents or guardian);
 - (d) pregnant or parenting;
 - (e) offender (an individual who has been subject to any stage of the criminal justice process, or requires assistance in overcoming artificial barriers to employment resulting from a record of arrest or conviction; or
 - (f) an individual (including a youth with a disability) who has no vocational/employment goal **and** has below average grades **or** has a poor work history (to include no work history) **or** has been fired from a job in the last six calendar months.